DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 524 CS 507 845

AUTHOR Richardson, Larry S.
TITLE Competing Academic Priorities and the Director of Forensics: Do We Need a Broader Definition of Scholarship?
PUB DATE 1 Nov 91
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (77th, Atlanta, GA, October 31-November 3, 1991).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Debate; *Faculty Development; *Faculty Evaluation; *Faculty Workload; Higher Education; *Scholarship
IDENTIFIERS Boyer (Ernest L); Debate Coaches; *Forensic Directors

ABSTRACT

The status of debate coaching as a career is on the decline. Conflicting priorities create tension between the roles of professor and director of forensics (DOF). One major problem is the academic expectation for an active life of scholarship, juxtaposed with the time-consuming demands of intensive work with the undergraduate forensic program in a competitive environment. Previous recommendations for resolution of this contradiction, which have been offered at conferences since 1974, have not been followed. Ernest L. Boyer's four-part definition of scholarship, which includes discovery, integration, application, and teaching, corresponds closely with the values of those involved with forensics programs. Boyer's concept of a creativity contract between faculty members and colleges also ties in with forensics. Such a contract could define the DOF's role in service, teaching, and scholarship, and be useful for both the individual professor and institutional goals. By adapting expectations to the individual, the DOF can integrate activities in teaching, scholarship, coaching, and service into a meaningful career line. Such an integration has considerable potential for forensic professionals' intellectual actualization. (SG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED346524

Competing Academic Priorities and the Director of Forensics:

Do We Need a Broader Definition of Scholarship?

Larry S. Richardson
Department of Communication
Western Washington University
Bellingham, WA 98225

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Larry S. Richardson
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Speech Communication Association
Atlanta, Georgia
November 1, 1991

CS507845

 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Competing Academic Priorities and the Director of Forensics:

Do we need a Broader Definition of Scholarship?

This paper is not a research study. It is a position paper. I wish to discuss the conflicting priorities of the role of professor and director of forensics. After developing some of the dimensions of this conflict, I will propose some solutions which may benefit at least some of our colleagues. And, because the leaders of our activity are benefitted, the activity should become stronger.

We have little data on the career development of Director of Forensics. Anecdotally, we know that some become full professors, deans, vice presidents and presidents of universities. We know that others fall by the wayside, dropping out of directing for alternative careers. I personally know of former DOFs who have become cab drivers, salesmen, tennis pros, and housewives. I also know of debate coaches who move from job to job without success in achieving tenure or promotion.

Nature of the Problem

Personal observation, drawn from an experience of 30 years in collegiate and high school forensics, suggests that the status of debate coaching as a career is on a decline. I would offer the following indicators, also based on personal observation:

1. There is a trend to employ Directors of Forensics (DOFs) in non-tenure track lines.
2. Many departments do not hold the forensic activity in high esteem. Note that many do not offer programs, and many do not assign departmental resources to the activity. Some have only graduate students coaching. Some maintain a sense of distance from the operation and practices of the program.
3. Smaller schools sometimes ask faculty without experience or course work in the activity to serve as director.
4. Major graduate schools are dropping forensics, thus denying opportunity for future professors to apprentice while completing their doctoral studies.
5. Few DOFs continue active directing or coaching after completion of their doctoral studies. Even fewer continue after gaining tenure.

While there are many pressure points that create tension between the roles of professor and DOF, one major problem is the academic expectation for an active life of scholarship. In many institutions, scholarship is defined as publication of articles in refereed journals, publication of scholarly books in ones field, and, to a lesser extent, presentation of refereed papers before learned societies. Scholarship takes time to focus and contemplate, to pursue research projects, and for the active process of writing. Juxtaposed with that challenge is the expectation that the DOF work intensively with the undergraduate forensic program in a competitive environment.

The forensic season begins before the fall quarter with the announcement of the resolution for debate. The ensuing months require preparation for and participatiion in from twenty to thirty events, most of which require travel. The season ends in late April with the last of the national tournaments. And, there remain the tasks of representing, then balancing the budget, working with forensic alumni, and preparing for the summer high school debate institute. All of this must also be balanced with a teaching load which for many is one half to three quarters of the load of other faculty. The conclusion is obvious--it is very difficult to marshall the time, energy, and motivation to engage in scholarship.

History of the Problem

This is not a new problem. Several of our national organizations and several conferences on the activity have devoted time and energy to resolution of the contradiction. The Sedalia, Evanston, and CEDA Developmental conferences, which can be associated with the 70's, the 80's, and the 90's have all dealt with the problem in their deliberations or reports.

The first National Developmental Conference met in Colorado at the Sedalia Retreat House September 1-6, 1974. Its conclusions on evaluation and promotion of the DOF are:

> The forensic educator should meet the departmental and institutional criteria for promotion, tenure, and compensation. Typically, the primary criterion for evaluating the performance of the forensic educator should be teaching effectiveness, including the directing of forensics as a teaching function.[1]

The conference also concerned itself with the teaching load of the forensic educator, suggesting that,

> Departmental administrators should be responsive to the educational characteristics of forensics programs:
> a) Work with forensics should be treated as part of the teaching assignment
> b)Additional remuneration should be provided in instances where forensics work is not considered a portion of the teaching assignment.
> c)Evaluation of the teaching load should include a measure of student contact hours... [2]

The minimum qualifications for a DOF included an M.A., specific formal instruction in argumentation, participation, and a course in philosophy and methods.

The "recommended qualifications" included a doctorate in speech communication and supervised involvement in directing forensic programs. The conference recommended continuing professional growth of the DOF include:

1. Participation in state, regional and national professional organizations
2. Ongoing scholarship including convention papers, publications, and leadership functions at state, regional, and national levels of professional associations
3. Maintenance of a lively dialogue and interaction among personnel at various educational levels within forensic[3]

The conference also recommended that all universities hosting doctoral programs in speech communication sponsor a forensic program. The program would serve as a laboratory for the education of DOFs.[4]

Careful reading of the previous recommendations suggests an effort to define scholarship so as to include the activities of the DOF. The proposal to include leadership activities overlooked the more common categorization of leadership as service. Granted, service all to often counts for little under the status quo, but recategorization is probably not an answer that will help colleagues. And to suggest that DOFs should meet the same criteria as other professors, then, in the next sentence, suggest the prime criterion be teaching effectiveness is, simply, a contradiction of terms. In an environment where scholarship and publication are the prime criteria for promotion and advancement, teaching is clearly a notch lower.

The second developmental conference, held at in Evanston at Northwestern University, relied heavily upon Sedalia in its orientation to issue of the DOF and scholarship. The Evanston conference was indicative of some changes in the forensic environment. "Given increasing budget constraints, Conference participants evidenced concern that fiscal restrictions might curtail or even end valuable programs in forensics. There was some concern that increased specialization in graduate programs may reduce rather than increase training for students desiring to become active directors of forensics."[5]

The committee on promotions and tenure standards was chaired by Craig Dudczak and David Zarefsky. They noted that the literature was indicated an increase of the primacy of scholarship as the leading criterion for promotion. But, the research of Emmert[6] indicated that teaching effectiveness remained the highest standard in speech communication department. He noted, "if there is a 'publish or perish' phenomenon in higher education, it does not appear to apply to the discipline of speech communication as much as to other disciplines." Dudczak and Zerefsky noted, however,"since the categories Emmert uses to report his data do not distinguish between graduate/research institutions and undergraduate/teaching schools, the

relatively low ranking may mask wide variance."[7] While speech communication people were successful at a 50% rate, and while this seemed to be the national average for all disciplines, Emmert concluded there was no particular problem. The paucity of specific data on forensic people, however, was noted by Dudczak and Zerefsky.

A study by Sharon Porter analyzed reasons cited by department chairs for denial of tenure for DOFs. The most cited reasons were: lack of publications (8 cases), ineffective teaching (6), ineffective management (4), and failure to get Ph.D.s (4).[8]

The committee proposed a detailed statement on tenure and promotion that, in general, sought to deal with the traditional triumvirate. They recommended that:

1. forensic appointments should be academic, not administrative.
2. the relative weight should be proportionate to the proportion of the individuals job assignment.
3. forensic educators should be evaluated by the same standards as their peers.
4. all aspects of the forensic educator's contribution should be taken into account.
5. there is confusion between standard and criteria.
6. quality should be the same as for colleagues, quantities should be adapted to the reality of the job.
7. forensic colleagues and students should participate in evaluation.
8. scholarship and service should be considered in terms of impact upon the activity.[9]

Altogether, the document provides a sound basis for the evaluation of DOFs <u>if</u> departments, colleges, and universities are willing to adapt their procedures and evaluations to individual cases. Again, there is no data to suggest that such is the case, and that forensic educators have been or are being recognized for the unique nature of their work and their contribution.

We are no better off than before. While some DOFs are continuing to find success in their efforts at tenure and promotion, there are full professors serving as DOFs. Good people continue to leave forensic activity because of frustration about advancement, burnout, loss of interest, or other factors. From all indications, I conclude that fewer among us are achieving terminal degrees. Of those who do, few continue as DOF upon completion, or after promotion and tenure. And, it would appear that more and more non tenure track, part time, people are in charge. Major schools are asking graduate students to take complete control of the programs. While there are multiple reasons for these phenomena, certainly, in a pavlovian world, the reward system plays a strong role.

A new Approach to an Old Problem

Ernest L. Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching stated in his book *Scholarship Reconsidered, Priorities of the Professoriate,*

> . . .today, at most four-year institutions, the requirements of tenure and promotion continue to focus heavily on research and in articles published in journals, especially those that are refereed. Good teaching is expected, but it is often inadequately assessed. And, the category of "service," while given token recognition by most colleges, is consistently underrated too.[10]

Boyer proposes that colleges and universities break the traditional dichotomy between teaching and scholarship. Such a redefinition would "give more options to professors and better service to students." Boyer laments that undergraduate education has declined since World War II days:

> ...The emphasis on undergraduate education, which throughout the years had drawn its inspiration from the colonial college tradition, was being overshadowed by the European university traditon, with its emphasis on graduate education and research. Specifically, at many of the nation's four-year institutions, the focus had moved from the student to the professorate, from general to specialized educatsion, and from loyalty to the campus to loyalty to the profession.[11]

Dr. Boyer proposes a new, four part definition of scholarship designed to recognize the wide variety of educational accomplishments and contributions a professor might make at various times in a career.

Spectra, newsletter of the Speech Communication Association provided a review of the four types of scholarship identified by Boyer:

Scholarship of Discovery

> The first and most familiar element in our model, the *scholarship of discovery* comes closes to what is meant when academics speak of "research." No tenants in the academy are held in higher regard than the commitment to knowledge for its own sake, to freedom of inquiry and to following, in a disciplined fashion, an investigation wherever it may lead. Research is central to the work of higher learning, which inquires into the meaning of scholarship, is rooted in the conviction that disciplined, investigative efforts within the academy should be strengthened, not diminished.

Scholarship of Integration

In proposing the *scholarship of integration,* Boyer underscores the need for scholars to give meaning to isolated facts, putting them in perspective. By integration, he means making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating date in a revealing way, often educating non specialists. In calling for scholarship of integration, he does not suggest returning to the "gentleman scholar' of an earlier time, nor does he have mind the dilettante. Rather, what he writes of is serious, disciplined work that seeks to interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear on original research.

Scholarship of Application

The third element, the *application* of knowledge, is when the scholar asks, "How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems.?" According to Boyer, all too frequently, service means not doing scholarship, but doing good. He proposes that to be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied directly to one's special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of this professional activity. Such service is serious, demanding work, requiring rigor --- and the accountability --- traditionally associated with research activities.

Scholarship of Teaching

In proposing the *scholarship of teaching*, the work of the professor becomes consequential only as it is understood by others. According to Boyer, teaching is often viewed as a routine function, tacked on, something almost anyone can do. He suggests than when defined as *scholarship,* teaching both educates and entices future scholars. He writes that great teachers create a common ground of intellectual commitment. They stimulate active, not passive learning and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over.[12]

Almost anyone associated with forensics will immediately recognize a remarkable convergence of values between those traditionally espoused in statements of forensic values and the Boyer construct of scholarship. For example, the material on teaching recognizes says, "great teachers create common ground for intellectual commitment." They encourage students to be critical creative thinkers... That is

what we are about in the great forensic enterprise. The scholarship of application certainly falls under or traditional claim that debate and contest speaking provides a laboratory for testing theories of argument, communication, and rhetoric. And, the scholarship of integration is directly related to work with students in case construction. Ideas from across academia are assimilated to form positions in response to real-world problems.

Dr. Boyer also proposes that colleges and universities develop *creativity contracts.* This is an arrangement where faculty members propose a plan of action for a 3 to five year period. A new period may usher in a new interest or phase of scholarship. Boyer proposes faculty evaluation could be on the basis of the creativity contract. This would provide for flexibility and change. Boyer writes:

> ...what's needed, we believe, are career paths that provide for flexibility and change. Alternating periods of goal-seeking and reassessment should be common for all academics ... to counter burnout or stagnation, scholarship in its fullest sense must be acknowledged. This means not only broadening the reward system, but also creating flexible and varied career paths for professors. We urgently need arrangements that encourage shifts and alterations throughout a lifetime.[13]

Creativity contracts could encompass such projects as: working with a mentor, examining literature, upgrading courses or materials, preparing videos or films, examining integrative questions, writing interpretive essays or a textbook. The key is that the contract be useful for both the individual professor and institutional goals.

Applying Scholarship Reconsidered to Forensics

The first and most obvious application of the Boyer concepts is to the job description of the DOF. Within the flexibility of the Boyer model, an individual could negotiate a creativity contract with the department. This would be a clear statement of goals which define the DOFs role in service, teaching, and scholarship in achieving goals such as tenure or promotion.

By adapting expectations to the individual, the DOF can integrate activities in teaching, scholarship, coaching, and service into a meaningful career line. For some, this might involve a definition of the program with performance objectives specified. It would, no doubt, force some philosophizing within the department as to the vary nature of the departmental program. Do we need more public debates? How many debate teams should we expected to participate? What should be the balance between classroom teaching and travel with the teams in the program? Will the DOF be rewarded for guiding apprentices who are assistants? Answering these questions should lead to a healthy discourse between the DOF and the department. Monitoring

of progress toward goals should strengthen the bond between program and department.

Second, the scholarship of integration has considerable potential for intellectul actualization of forensic professionals. Applying rhetorical, communication, and political theories to the realities of debate cases is an excellent example. Developing new formats and fora for debate and contest speaking is another example. A third would be cooperative efforts among DOFs in participating in learning and creative activities. Presentation of a panel at a forensic tournament is both an integrative and teaching activity unique to the forensic setting, and capable of bringing forth a scholar's significant efforts.

Finally, several specific ideas some to mind which might well represent implementations of the spirit of the Boyer suggestions. Here are a few:

1. Encourage more faculty presented seminars at forensic tournaments.
2. Encourage professional organizations in forensics to become more active in encouraging scholarship using the Boyer models. This could radically alter the nature of panels at SCA. DOFs could meet together to enhance their professional growth through exchanges of ideas, discussions of theories, demonstrations of teaching materials, etc.
3. Encourage experienced DOFs to serve as mentors for younger persons aspiring to a career in the field. Graduate programs lacking forensic programs could arrange for apprenticeships with colleges and universities who have programs led by experienced and competent directors.
4. Offer summer activities such as workshops and courses for younger DOFs who need specific training in applied argument and in program administration.
5. Foster improvement of instruction experiences among DOFs including models used in campus improvement of instruction programs.
6. Encourage increased dialogue between DOFs and their parent departments and their administrators in order to harmonize and coordinate goal setting, monitoring of progress, and maintenance of quality instruction and supervision.
7. Develop better rationale statements to achieve recognition of tournament and institute hosting as teaching functions worthy of reward. Persuade tournaments and institutes to be self critical and innovative, offering new learning opportunities for students, and providing DOFs with a claim to excellence in teaching.
8. Develop national norms for competition designed to control the length and amount of the forensic year in an effort to avoid professor burnout and to stimulate faculty to remain in the activity. Suggestions of this sort were derided at the recent CEDA developmental conference in St. Paul. Unless the commitment to travel is controlled somewhat, the need for mid-career professionals to abandon the activity to the pre-doctoral DOFs and to the graduate assistants will increase.

Conclusions

It is my position that the professional status of Directors of Forensics within academe has been eroding gradually for the past thirty years. The erosion is hard to detect at any given moment. Indeed, the current crop of DOFs seems to be having a fine time travelling to tournaments, being competitive, and sharing the thrill of victory and the despair of defeat. It is too bad that their term of service will be shorter than it might be. What concerns me is that the number of forensic programs is down, the numbered of tenured DOFs is down, and the number of schools dedicated to competitive debate is down. While this is not clearly documented, those of us with experience can point to numerous indicators. The numbers of debaters are good for the remaining schools, but the number of debaters as a fraction of college undergraduates is no doubt down.

Several national conferences have addressed the issue of professional development of DOFs. The situation, however, has not improved.

The proposals of Ernest L. Boyer in *Scholarship Reconsidered* provides a basis to readdress this problem in a very basic way. This approach provides opportunity for third-order change regarding the status, activity, and evaluation of DOFs. Departments and individuals should take this opportunity seriously as a means to strengthen the role of DOF and, consequently, the position of forensic programs in American academe.

References Cited

1. James H. McBath, Ed., *Forensics as Communication: The Argumentative Perspective*.(Skokie, Ill., National Textbook Company, 1975) p. 47.

2. Ibid., p. 47-48

3. Ibid., p. 44

4. Ibid., p. 46

5. Donn Parson, Ed., *American Forensics in Perspective: Papers from the Second National Conference on Forensics*. (Annadale, VA., The Speech Communication Association, 1984) p.38

6. Phillip Emmert, "Salary, Merit, Promotion and Tenure Practices in Speech Communication Departments," *ACA Bulletin*,No.36 (April 1981), pp. 72,73.

7. Ibid. Craig A. Dudczak and David Zerefsky, "Promotions and Tenure Standards," in Parson.

8. Sharon Porter, "Preliminary Analysis on Promotion and Tenure Survey," Unpublished. The results cited here are from a preliminary data analysis of a return by 127 Directors of Forensics and 94 Chairpersons.

9. Ibid., Dudczak and Zerefsky, pp. 25-30.

10. Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate*. (Princeton, NJ, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990) p.28

11. Ibid., p.13

12. Ibid., p.1-3

13. Ibid., p. 48-50.